

SPELLBOUND 281

Chapter 281 - Distrust

"Fine... as you wish, let's talk." He uttered with no warmth in his voice. "Let's talk about that man you married, Evie."

Evie felt her heart squeezed in pain as she looked at him. His eyes were coated over with anger. Now that she was looking at him without that nagging thought that he was someone else, Evie realized how wretched he looked. And she could barely hold back her tears from spilling from her eyes.

He had the look of a man who went through hell over and over. He was spilling over with so much darkness and power, but he was heartbreakingly damaged. At that moment, Evie realized what people meant when they say there was something hauntingly beautiful in broken things.

This man... how hauntingly beautiful he was right now as he looked down at her.

Just looking at him made her heart bleed and she could no longer hold back her tears from falling silently from the corners of her eyes.

Seeing the tears falling from her eyes, Gavrael's jaws worked. He loosened his grip on her wrists thinking that he must have hurt her. Or was she tearing up to throw him off, because she knew her tears were always his greatest weakness?

The thought made him harden his heart. "If you think your tears will work on me like it used to, then I'm sorry to tell you it isn't as effective anymore, Evie. So, stop crying and talk now. Tell me everything you know about that man. Because if you don't, I might force –" He was cut off before he could finish his warning.

Suddenly, her soft and warm lips come crashing against his, making him freeze in shock. That was the last thing that he would have thought she would do.

His eyes widened, not sure how to respond for a few seconds. His brain stopped working for a while until she fell back on the bed again. What was she doing? After all her defiance and utter fear towards him since they saw each other again, she suddenly kissed him on her own accord?

Gavrael's heart which he thought had turned into stone shook at that single simple move she did. And he did not like how he responded, the reaction of his own heart. His foolish heart that never seemed to learn its lesson. He told himself that this girl was definitely trying to mellow him out and then when he loosened up his hold, she would escape and leave him...

His aura darkened again at those thoughts and Evie could not help but smile bitterly.

It was obvious to her that he was fighting against his responses to her. And she did not like that he seemed to have truly and successfully learned to control his reaction to her.

She badly wanted to talk now but she wanted him to loosen up first. How could she even start when he was filled with fury right now? His barriers were up so high that she could practically see it up. Could he even understand or accept what she was going to tell him when he was like this? He looked like he was about to blow up any second and she could not help but worry if she should start now or must she calm him down first. She also worried that he might not believe her since she could already feel his distrust. There were huge trust issues that he held as a grudge towards her.

She also felt that he did not even believe her kiss was real. The thought that he might blow up or storm out before she could even tell him everything made her feel hesitant. He had done it quite a few times already. He raged if she mentioned something he did not like, then stopped her from talking or disappear so he would not have to hear what she was saying.

"Alright... I will speak but I want you to... not leave until I'm finished telling you everything. I want you to listen to me until the end..." She said and as expected, his face darkened. "Also... could you calm down first, please? You know how intense you are right now, right? It's hard to talk if your aura is this strong."

He smirked. A cold and dead smirk. "Don't waste your time, Evie because even if I want to, it's not possible for me to calm down anymore. This is how I am now, Evie... I can't suppress my darkness anymore so get used to it from here on."

"Are you sure about that? That it's no longer possible?" she asked softly, and he frowned, frustration flashing in his again because of her stubbornness.

"Stop testing my limit, Evie and just..."

Once again, he was stopped by the touch of her lips against his own. Gavrael let go of her hands to grab onto her shoulders and pushed her down. But Evie took this opportunity to quickly wrap her hands around his neck. And she was careful to do it as gently and lovingly as she could, not wanting to trigger him further.

And soon as she got a hold of him, she pulled away a little. However, their lips were still slightly touching each other's.

"I'd like to see it for myself, Gav. If what you said is true... that's its no longer possible for you to calm down..." She whispered and then suddenly she kissed him again, this time harder, wilder, as she passionately tried to pry his lips open. And he mentally berated himself harshly because he opened up to her almost immediately as if he had been waiting so desperately for eternity for her to kiss him like this. He was like a parched desert land that had sweet cool rain finally falling on it after such a long time.

Chapter 282 - Idiot

As soon as he parted his lips, Evie immediately slanted her mouth and sealed his lips with hers. She slid her tongue even deep inside and it did not come slow nor soft. It was more like a savage, utterly impatient invasion.

And Gavrael was completely caught off guard, never expecting her to kiss him in such an aggressive manner. It was as though she was the one who was impatient. Then she began to suck and tangled her tongue with his with the intensity of a wild little hungry beast. Her sudden kiss had come as a big shock to him already, but this wildness of hers hit him harder. It all but shock him speechless – and that was a really hard thing to do to the current Gavrael.

When... when had she learnt how to kiss like this? Gavrael knew how shy Evie was. She was such an innocent young lady. He had always been holding back – painfully so. Yes, he had held back a great deal every time he was being intimate with her. He did not want to scare her maidenly sensibilities. He had been scared that he might take it too far and become too wild or too rough with his kisses. So, every single time, he had tried to keep everything in moderation no matter how hard it was for him. Therefore, he was certain that he had never kissed her this wildly before.

Yet now, here she was, kissing him with such spine-tingling skill. It was as if she had been kissed that way many times before. W-who... who taught you...

Suddenly, he turned completely rigid once again. And his aura that had started to calm down just a while ago, now flared out again. And this time, it was even more intense. The thought that some other man had taught her to kiss like this made his blood boil over in anger. The wrath became too strong that it had actually overpowered the insane lust and desire her wild kiss had evoked within him.

Evie on the other hand, of course immediately felt his rigidity and the suffocating darkness which was seeping out from him again. She could not help but feel nervous now, knowing that he would definitely pull away at this rate. At the same time, she was in utter dismay and worry... that even her kisses did not seem to be working anymore. Was there something wrong with the way that she had kissed him? Did he not love it earlier that she could feel his excitement build? So, what had gone wrong?

The fear that she could not affect him anymore made her heart shake. What should she do? No, what else she could do? Evie... think...!

And as she had expected, she felt him lift his hands. No! He was going to peel her hands off him!

Panic surged within her and suddenly, before Gavrael could touch her arms, she rolled over, bringing the both of them tumbling.

Gavrael's body was still very much affected by Evie's kiss. So, Evie managed to somehow flip him around. She also used the magic spell Zanya had taught her to give her a momentary boost in strength and she was glad she remembered it at the very last second.

Surprised, Gavrael's eyes widened a little as he looked at Evie, who was now straddling him. Her hands were now pinning his above his head.

"I'm not going to let you escape from me, Gav." She said and silence reigned between them for a second. "What's wrong? Didn't you say you want me? Why are you not responding to my kisses? Were you lying when you had professed how much you love me just moments ago? How could you still look this angry when I'm kissing you? Do you despise my kisses now?" she did not give him a chance to refute and sent a continuous barrage of words, hoping to either distract him or help him calm down.

Hearing her bombarding him with those questions, his surprised expression was replaced by a deep, confused, frown.

Then his eyes blazed in anger and like a lightning bolt, he flipped them over and changed their positions once again. Evie was now back under him again, his body weight pressing her into the soft mattress, keeping her locked in place. His grip on her hands had tightened up so much that it started to hurt her.

"Yes, you're right, Evie! I despise that you've learned to kiss wildly like that from another man and not from me!" he hissed out in fury, not sure whether to be angry at being goaded into blurting that out or to wail in sorrow that his once innocent Evie had been introduced to adult pleasures by one who is not him.

Upon hearing Gavrael snarl out those words, Evie could only gape at him, open-mouthed for a few long seconds.

A helpless, frustrated laugh escaped her plumped and rosy lips and she could not help but tear up from the frustration. When her laugh faded, her eyes sharpened, and she lashed out at him. "You, big idiot! You were the one who taught me how to kiss like that! You kissed me so savagely like that that first night we kissed, remember?! How could you forget about it all, you, silly, silly man! You keep telling me that I am the one who has forgotten about you. But do you know... you have forgotten all about me too! You... brute! You...big bully!" she ranted and raged at him, letting out all her frustration before suddenly breaking down and began to sob, large teardrops falling pitifully from her sorrowful eyes. "I am tired... Gav... really tired..." her voice weakened as it trailed off. "All I want is for you to just kiss me... embrace me... then we can finally talk and tell each other everything. But you... can't you just stop being angry for now and just kiss me?" she raised those crystal-like eyes filled with glimmering tears that clumped up her thick lashes. And Gavrael's fiery anger somehow dispersed a little. His heart gave a jolt seeing his woman being in such sorrow and pain.

However, Gavrael was still utterly confused at what she had said but instead of continuously probing her about it, he bent down and crushed his mouth against hers, granting her the request she had tearfully asked of him. He did not know what happened but as she sobbed and those words tumbled out from her lips, he did not only feel the strange emotions that bubbled within his chest, but his body also began to move on its own as if it were no longer under his control. And the next thing he knew, he was kissing her in a way he had never done before.

The kiss was not the kind of restrained kiss he was always giving her before. This time, he kissed her, just like the way she just did until their slick tongues were intertwining hungrily with each other's. Their mouths created erotic sounds inside the room and Gavrael felt it again, this strange feeling that was as if he had kissed her like this many times before.. Like a dream that he had forgotten upon awakening from.

Chapter 283 - Recounting

Their deep, raw and spine tingling kiss continued on. While they kissed, their tongues danced in a perfect sensual rhythm as their hands caressed each other, initially running over each other's clothes but as the temperature heated up between them their hands crept beneath the clothes for a more intimate touch. The way he sucked and licked the insides of her mouth and made her moan, gave him that feeling as if they had shared such wild kisses many times before and his body knows without a doubt on what exactly she wants from him. How could this be? How was this even happening?

When their lips parted after that long and passion filled kiss, Evie gave such a satisfied smile as their heavy breaths mingled with each other's. "See? Your body remembers what your mind can't, Gav." She whispered, glad that he did not burst out in another fit of temper and that his body could still respond to her in the same way as before.

Gavrael was frozen still. He just sat there staring back at her. 'Your body remembers what your mind can't'. Those words kept replaying in his head as he calmed down from the high caused by their intense make out session earlier. He could not believe that those words made perfect sense as he felt it in his bones that this was definitely not the first time that they had kissed like this at all!

"Do you believe me now? Can you now see that you were the one who taught me... all that?" she asked again, smiling tenderly at him as she reached out to caress his face gently. "The man I married is you, Gav..." she added and when he could not say a single word, Evie began to tell him everything. All that Claudius had told her, she recounted every single detail, not leaving even a single point out.

She told him that he had turned back time and that he had regressed into a boy and grew up as the vampire prince, Gavriel, the man that she married. She told him how they met up until that night when they got separated in Dacia.

"I believed something must have happened to you, to Gavriel, that night when you were fighting against Thundrann. I believed that it was that same night you awakened as Gavrael." Evie said as she concluded her recounting.

Gavrael closed his eyes and struggled to process what he had just heard. His anger was still crawling inside him, all prepared to burst forth at any time. But with her, still straddling his lap as he sat on the bed, and the closeness and warmth of her hands, he felt the darkness within him withdrew slightly and becoming still. At least for now.

"You're saying that I turned back time and instead of just a few days, I returned to many years ago, when I was a little boy and grew up as Gavriel?" he asked in disbelief. It was apparent on his expression that he was unable to believe it.

"Yes."

"Then how do you explain why my memories as Gavrael still exists? If I turned back time, then everything should have been erased as time started all over again. If I turned back time and returned to when I was a little boy, that means I would have never met you in that forest as Gavrael because Gavrael does not exist then. How would you explain –" He had listed the same clash of facts as Evie did when she heard this for the first time from Claudius.

"Claudius said that is your punishment for turning back time, Gav." Evie could only answer him gently.

Gavrael's eyes circled. C-claudius?! She knew about Claudius? Gavrael had never told Evie about Claudius. He had only told her about his parents so how come...

"Claudius appeared to me and told me everything Gav. He said that the reason why you still remember and retained those memories that should've been erased is because you are being punished for using that forbidden spell." She told him and Gavrael tugged at his hair.

He still could not believe this confusing twist of events but when she mentioned Claudius, he could no longer brush this off and laugh at everything that Evie had told him. The fact that she could bring him up was enough to prove that this was all the truth and not something that she was trying to cook up.

Then suddenly, he remembered the image he saw in his nightmare.

"Tell me," he looked at her. "Did Claudius tell you why I turned back time?" he asked.

"He said he just knew that something probably happened to me and that you wanted to save me. That's why you did that."

Gavrael became utterly immobile. And the next second, he laughed.

Now it somehow made sense. If that event happened, that Evie had indeed died like what he saw in his dream, he knew he had definitely turned back time to save her. Now that he thought about it, him, turning back time made a lot of sense. This would explain why that prince Gavriel, looked exactly like him. This explains why Evie had forgotten about him. This would explain why he had found himself in that dungeon of the ruined city of Dacia without any recollection on how he even arrived there. This would explain all the nonsensical sufferings he had to go through for so long. This would explain the long years he had spent looking for Evie in such a strange place and not being able to find her at all. This was the reason why!

'So, it turned out that while my original body returned to my boyhood stage, I was stuck somewhere as my punishment. And while my body was growing up and making his own memories, I was stuck somewhere, probably in spirit, in an unknown place, all alone and suffering endlessly.' Gavrael could not help but laugh ironically, shaking his head as he thought all that to himself.

Chapter 284 - Rest

When his bitter laughter faded, a deep silence followed. He had lowered his head and did not lift his face to look at her for a long while. But Evie waited patiently, not taking her gaze off of him. She could only sympathise with him on what he is currently going through, as there was no way there was anyone who could understand his suffering. What intense confusion and upheaval of emotions must it be to suddenly find out there was another deeper truth that was hidden and suddenly unearthed all of a sudden.

It was then that she really wanted to know what he was thinking. She also wished he would lift his head to look at her. She wanted to ask but she was still a little wary because right then, he seemed to be having a hard time accepting everything that she had just told him. And honestly, she would not blame him. Even she found it so unbelievable the first time she had heard it from Claudius.

Evie decided to give him more time to process everything in his mind and wait for him patiently. However, as time ticked by, and he still remained silent and unmoving, Evie could no longer keep her peace. She was worried he would get caught in a loop of endless whys and hows – trapped by his own regrets or 'what ifs'.

"Gav..." she called out softly and thankfully, he slowly lifted his head to look at her. His eyes were deep and unfathomable. She could not quite figure out what he was thinking nor feeling at that moment. And her heart just went out to him even more.

"Do you believe all these, Evie? Do you truly accept that all those things that you have just said as truth?" he asked, and Evie saw what seemed like pure and unadulterated anguish flashing momentarily across those intense blue eyes of his. "There is no proof that all the things Claudius told you are the truth –" His voice seemed to be without emotions – as though he was withholding them back from gushing forth.

"I believe it." She cut him off without any hesitation. "I can't explain why but I believe it." She added, her eyes locked onto his with sparkling determination, as if willing him to believe in it as well. "You believe it too, right? I know you do." Her eyes then widened as she suddenly had a sliver of fear that he might want to deny it.

He stared at her for a few moments and then a soft chuckle bubbled out of him again. It came out sounding like a lovely, and sinuous, yet a little sad and bitter laughter. "I don't have a choice but to believe it, right?" he shook his head as he asked her. And then he let himself fall back on the bed.

Evie stared down at him and he looked as though he was incredibly tired as laid there, unmoving. His sallow and wan features looked as though exhaustion had suddenly hit him hard, right below the belt, and now, all he could do was nothing but to lie down and accept whatever that comes his way. Somehow, the sight of him behaving this way at that moment made Evie suddenly feel an immense tiredness surge within her and she let herself fall on top of him.

She rested her head on his chest and listened to his heartbeat as it beat on steadily and rhythmically, calming her down. And then, she allowed her eyes to slowly close. It felt as though their souls that were overly exhausted were now finally given the chance to feel that sweet rest of relief, they had both been longing for so long. It was the feeling like the both of them had finally emerged from an underwater cocoon with stale air after being stuck down there for so long. And what a breath of pure and fresh air that had seemed to greet them once they surfaced from that suffocated condition.

For a long time, they just stayed that way in silence. It was as if they were trying to just bask and relax in that moment that had been so hard to come by.

"I saw your portrait with Gavriel..." his voice suddenly echoed beside her ear after a long silence and Evie looked up, surprised.

"Portrait?"

"I had asked my men for Gavriel's portrait. So they had sneaked into Gavriel's castle and took it." He explained, quite unapologetically.

Evie's eyes widened and then narrowed. "Why? Wait... could it be because you were planning to kill him?"

When he smirked wickedly, Evie gasped in shock. And then she burst out laughing as she imagined how his reaction was when he first laid eyes on the portrait. This was the first time she had laughed genuinely after so long, and Gavrael's eyes gleamed tenderly as he watched her as he enjoyed listening to the sounds of her laughter like a dozen little bells chiming in harmony. That sound alone was able to warm up his stony and frozen heart. It also seemed to have caused the iciness in his eyes to finally start melting now.

"You want Gavriel back, right?" he asked suddenly, and Evie stilled. She never expected that he would ask that question and she could not immediately answer him. She did not know why she suddenly felt a lump in her throat. Was it because of his expression right now?

"I..." she struggled to find a way to reply to him diplomatically. Yes, she badly wanted Gavriel back. But why was she having a hard time saying it to him?

"Y-you and Gavriel are one and the same person." She said after a long while and he smiled wryly at her. She felt that he was about to say something, but he closed his eyes instead.

When he opened his eyes again, his gaze was intense.

"I am going to keep my promise to you, Evie..." he told her, "I am going to make you queen.. But first, I am going to make myself the king of the vampires first."

Chapter 285 - About Him

"I am going to make you queen. But first, I am going to make myself the king of the vampires first." Gavrael said and Evie blinked. Did he make that promise to her before he turned back time? Suddenly, Evie did not know how to respond to him.

"I am going to take this empire's throne." He added and Evie finally found her voice.

"You're going to tell me to stay back and watch, right?" she asked and when he just silently stared at her, Evie immediately tried to convince him. "When we got separated from Dacia onwards, I learned many things during my journey to Crescia. I can now call upon the dragons too. If you don't believe me, I can show it to you now! Do you want to see it?" Evie got excited as she told him all these.

Gavrael lifted a brow. "Really? You were able to learn all that by yourself?" Gavrael thought that his Evie was different from this Evie. This Evie was more confident. And he thought, she is stronger too. The previous Evie he knew was so much more dependent on him. He had to work extra hard to make her learn about her own magic and abilities. But this Evie actually learned all of that on her own initiative.

"No. Actually, I was not alone. I have Zanya and my men who were there to support me. My desire to see you again also made me work extra hard." She explained, her face serene and looking proud of everything that she had achieved so far.

But at the thought of her comrades, Evie's eyes circled wide, and she looked down at Gavrael with large, doe-eyed pleading eyes.

"Gav... please, release my comrades. Ah, I forgot to tell you, those men are your men, too. They are the elites who serve you loyally. They've been with you for years. You had told me previously that some of them were already with you ever since you were young. You were the one who ordered them to protect me with their lives. Now come and let's release them." She climbed off the bed and pulled at his hand in a playful and teasing manner.

Gavrael's mind was still a little disoriented, but he understood everything she was saying. So that explained why those men fought so well. When he had gone against them, he had felt like he had fought against them before and that was why those men seemed to be able to predict his next moves. He also remembered that he felt something strange when he was about to kill that long haired man. Somehow, his body just stopped in its tracks before his sword could slit his throat.

"Those men have been so loyal to you for many years and would even give their lives up for you. Therefore, you can't treat them like that. They are our greatest allies, Gav." She said with a smile as she tugged his hand a little harder this time, realising he was not that opposed to her suggestions now as he was before.

And to her relief, he did not object at all this time. He brought her to the prison silently.

Once they arrived at the underground cell, Evie immediately asked Gavrael to unlock the doors. Without saying a word, Gavrael used his magic and the bars swung open on their own.

Evie immediately rushed inside and hugged Zanya. After that, she quickly pushed Zanya at arm's length to examine her from head to toe.

"Are you alright? These men didn't bully you, right?" Evie asked as she eyed her men, most especially Levy. The rest of them only either rolled their eyes at her or looked offended at her comments. Only Levy had the decency to blush slightly as he averted his eyes from the princess' accusing gaze, laughing a little sheepishly.

Zanya smiled as she chuckled. "Don't worry, Princess, they've been nice to me."

"That's a relief." Evie sighed and then without wasting a moment she began to fill them in on everything that had happened. She explained to them about Gavrael and Gavriel as well, causing everyone's mouth to part open in disbelief. And then they all looked at the silent and brooding man who was leaning against the wall and watching them all the while the princess had been updating them on the news.

"That's why you don't need to fear him anymore. He's the very same master you guys served for years. Also, I already told him about you guys." Evie added cheerfully, and the men were speechless. They could only glance discreetly at Gavrael before exchanging glances with each other.

They were relieved now, but they knew it will be hard for them not to fear him immediately right off the bat. Much less to act familiar around him and treat him like how they had used to treat Prince Gavriel. Somehow, the situation was pretty awkward.

Evie then approached Gavrael again and with a big smile, she spoke. "Are you going to assign them important roles?"

Gavrael stared at her quietly and the other men awkwardly waited for Gavrael to speak.

"They'll remain as your guards, Evie." He said and Evie tilted her head.

"All of them? Won't you take some of them with you?"

"I don't need guards."

Silence reigned inside the closed space.

"Then maybe as one of your generals?" Evie broke the silence again.

The men were glancing at each other. They were unsure on how to react on this issue. But they could not deny that they still did not like this Gavrael very much. They want their master Gavriel back.

Due to Evie's insistence, Gavrael lifted his gaze towards the men. His gaze fell to Samuel and then to Leon.

"Fine, I'll make two of them my generals." He gave in.

"Alright." Evie smiled widely, happy that he had acquiesced to her wishes. "Now it's time for us to go and eat. We're all hungry! Have you eaten, Gav?"

Gavrael shook his head and Evie clapped her hands. "Alright, all of us will go and have a feast then." She said and she dragged Gavrael behind her after telling everyone to follow them.

The men looked at Gavrael's back. They could all feel how strong the man was. His words that he did not need guards keep on replaying in their minds. All of them thought that with how he was right now, he might not even need their help at all. And they could not help but feel a little down.

Then their gazes fell towards the princess. They could not help but wonder how their princess felt about all of this, most especially about him.

Chapter 286 - Come On

In the dining hall, everyone was seated around a long table. Gavrael sat elegantly at the head of the table, lazily leaning his head on his knuckles as he contentedly watched Evie eat.

Evie, Zanya and the men were all very hungry, so they fixed their attention on the array of scrumptious food that was spread before them. Of course, with the exception of Evie alone, everyone still felt the uncomfortable dark presence that was exuded by the person who was seated at the head of the table. If they were not so hungry, they would have definitely been unable to ignore his presence and able to swallow their food!

All of them somehow enjoyed the delicious food prepared for them but their enjoyment slowly died down as they became more and more conscious of Gavrael's presence now. They could not only feel his incredibly strong and dark presence but his piercing stare too. Was he studying or scrutinizing them? Why? Could it be that he was trying to remember them? Of course not, otherwise, he should not be looking at them with that ice cold and sharp gaze!

It felt as though a razor sharp blade was slicing and stabbing into them, trying to carve their thoughts and pierce the intentions in their hearts. It was discomfiting to say the least. Especially for Zanya, who is the weakest of them all in her powerless state. She particularly felt as though buckets of sweat were pouring down her back.

"Why are you not eating?" At long last, Evie broke the awkward silence that lingered in the hall when she finally looked up from her plate and turned to Gavrael. She then noticed that he had hardly touched anything on his own plate.

Gavrael's gaze returned to her and then he looked down at the food on his plate again.

When he lifted his gaze and opened his mouth to speak, a piece of juicy meat was shoved right before his face, dangling tantalisingly on a silver fork and coated lightly with some sauce.

"This one's delicious, Gav. Come on, have a taste." She urged, smiling as she moved the meat to his lips. Her sparkling eyes were wide and expectant as she waited for him to bite into that piece she had purposely cut for him.

Gavrael furtively took a glance at the men who seemed to be observing their interactions, and all of them quickly averted their gazes in perfect unison. Of course, he had caught their expressions before they looked down to hide their faces.

Suddenly, a soft chuckle escaped from Evie's lips. Somehow, she did not expect him to even look at the men first. If he remembered how he was as Gavriel, she knew he would have definitely smirked happily at her actions and immediately ate the meat she was offering. That would have happened without a doubt, even though she and Gavriel never ate with these men before.

But now, looking at him seemingly embarrassed at what he was about to do made Evie unable to stop herself from chuckling out loud. His reactions could only be described as cute... though she would never say it out loud as he would definitely scowl hearing her use that word in the same sentence with him. She wondered if this was how she had looked like when Gavriel first fed her the same way, back when she had just arrived at his castle.

"Come on, open your mouth Gav. Here... say, 'aaah'..." She urged again playfully, teasing him. Somehow, she felt warmth blooming inside her chest. She knew there was still something amiss but, it was enough for her that she was here with him, for now.

As she flashed him a sweet and loving smile, Gavrael glanced at everyone again and when he saw that no one was looking, he finally popped the small piece of proffered meat into his mouth, munching slowly on it as he savoured the taste of it. Somehow, it tasted much better coming from her fork than from the one on his plate before him.

"Delicious, isn't it?" Evie asked merrily, her eyes cheerfully twinkling as she enjoyed watching him eat. He really made eating to be a form of art to be admired, with his proper princely bearing and graceful manner of dining.

Gavrael simply nodded as he chewed quietly. "Oh! Come and taste this one too, you loved this dish."

As Evie continued handing him little bits and pieces of food offered on her own fork, the men began to glance sideways to look at each other. 'Good grief, this is going to cause me terrible indigestion.' Levy complained as he made pitiful puppy like eyes. 'I'd like a woman to pamper me like that too.' He made a face as if he were crying without tears.

Samuel, Zolan and Leon's expression did not change but Reed was blushing, while Luc and Elias were visibly trying so hard to keep their faces straight, holding in their laughter that was dangerously on the surface and about to bubble out. Zanya on the other hand, was observing and continuously glancing at Evie and looking quite awed at the princess' behaviour towards him.

Because Zanya was sitting between Leon and Levy, Levy leaned towards Zanya and whispered with a playful smile. "Our princess is amazing, right?" he said and Zanya looked at him. "I don't mind it if you want to try doing that to me," he flirted, winking at her. "I'd more than welcome your tries..."

Zanya blinked at him as he was already opening his mouth, showing that he was expecting her to feed him something from her plate.

But out of the blue, an arm whooshed down before Zanya could even respond and a piece of meat was already roughly shoved inside Levy's mouth. Choking and looking past Zanya, he saw that it was Leon who did that.

Levy glared at Leon. 'You – !!'

'The princess had ordered me not let you bully her. Don't take it personally, I'm just doing my job.' Leon replied expressionless through their telepathy.

'What the hell, man. When did I bully her?' Levy whined and moaned through their telepathic link, pouting at the end.

'She looked uncomfortable.' Was all Leon replied with.

'Ugh!' Levy groaned, feeling frustrated and rolled his eyes at that hulk of a vampire, when Zanya gave out a quiet chuckle.

"Alright, should we change seats?" Zanya asked Levy suggestively.

"Huh? Why?" the man frowned questioningly, unsure what she meant with her question.

"That way, the two of you can feed each other without any barriers. I know I'm in the way." She said mischievously and both men's eyes rounded out in shock. Zolan and Luc started to tremble as they held back desperately, trying very hard not to laugh out loud at what the Light Fae had commented on.

'This is your fault, you dimwit! God dammit!' Levy angrily glared at Leon.

'You started it.' Leon said simply and shrugged his shoulders carelessly. After which, he turned his focus back to his food as though nothing of the sort had just happened, leaving Levy feeling so frustrated and bursting at the seams on his own.

Chapter 287 - Right Hand

After their meal, Gavrael officially assigned Samuel and Leon their roles within his regiment. The others were assigned as commanders as well, while Zanya and Elias were told that they will be in charge of Evie's personal needs. Their positions were retained to ones just like before so none of them complained. They could tell that Gavrael already knew what he was doing.

"How about me?" Evie asked, pointing at herself with enthusiasm. "I believe I am qualified to stand next to you now, Gav. I think I can be your right hand now."

Gavrael was visibly surprised. Even the others were speechless at what the princess had said. However, with her powers of being able to summon dragons, she is now definitely the second most powerful person in their group. So, it was not actually a totally baseless thing, what that the princess had claimed.

But would this man even agree? If it was prince Gavriel, the men could bet a hundred percent that he would be completely against it. However, it was now Gavrael that is standing before them. Therefore, they were unsure how he would react to it.

"Give me three reasons why you deserve to stand next to me, Evie." Gavrael said, raising a brow at her.

Of course, the men were surprised. But they did not say a thing and just stood there, watching the couple interact with each other.

Confidently, Evie lifted her chin up and stared right at him. "First, I am very good at archery, second, I can use magic to protect myself, third, I can summon and control dragons. You wanted three reasons and I've given you three!"

The pride and confidence in her voice as she said those words made the corner of Gavrael's lips curve up into a little smile.

"If you do not believe me or have even a slightest doubt, I can show you, right here right now, Gav." She added and just as she wished, all of them headed to the northern most tower of the city.

Evie did not waste a single moment once they arrived and showed him her skills. She was so fired up she even used her magic to light up the edges of her arrow, hitting the bullseyes so cleanly and effortlessly.

Then she showed off the magic Zanya had taught her. She also told him about her ability to extinguish dragon's fire that was aimed at her. And then she began to call upon a dragon.

Evie was hesitant at first, as she thought it might not be a good idea to summon one right into the city. But Gavrael had immediately told her there was nothing to worry about and just go ahead and call on the dragon. So, Evie went ahead and did just that. She called for Silver and the dragon came swirling in the sky and landed silently but nonetheless majestically on the wall.

With a grin on her face, Evie turned and faced Gavrael, her excitement clearly apparent to all. "You believe me now?" she asked. Gavrael quietly watched her as she smiled widely at him. His Evie had never told him if she was a good archer, so he never had an idea if she's good at archery. His Evie had also learned her magic and learned to control the dragons but... he had never seen her as confident as how she was today while using her abilities. There was always hesitation and a tinge of fear whenever she uses her magic, most especially when she is controlling her dragons. The Evie in his memories was a far cry to the very confident Evie that was standing before him right now...

Meanwhile, at that moment, Zolan had been busy watching Gavrael's expression all this time. He was curious about him and his thoughts about all this. Zolan could see he was pleased and proud at the showing of the princess' skills but... Zolan furrowed his brows before letting out a sigh. He could not read him at all as Gavrael was hiding his emotions way too well. It is impossible for him to know what he was thinking of right now.

But somehow, Zolan was just glad that he does not plan to keep the princess locked up inside a protected room. It was a relief that he seemed to be planning to really involve her in the war.

"Do you still need to see more?" Evie asked, meeting Gavrael's gaze. Then she walked over to Silver and touched the dragon's head gently. She lovingly leaned on the creature and pressed her cheeks on the dragon's snout as she spoke to Gavrael. "I can show you more, if you still -"

"That's enough." He suddenly cut her off. His expression was suddenly dark. Even the men behind him felt the surge of dark pressure suddenly filling the air. What had just happened?! Everything was fine and dandy just a moment ago.

They followed his line of sight, and they could only face palm within the safe confines of their minds. Somehow, it seemed that this version of their master was still the same jealous guy... perhaps even more so!

Gavrael approached Evie and pulled her away from the dragon, causing Evie to blink in confusion.

"Send him back. Now." he ordered, and Evie looked up at him.

"Alright, but tell me first... I am more than qualified now, right?" she asked. "I can call not just one dragon you know?" she coaxed. "Alright, why don't I call another -"

"You are qualified." He cut her off with an annoyed tone and Evie grinned happily.

When Silver was gone, they all headed back to the castle. Gavrael ordered everyone to head to their assigned posts and when everyone left, Evie asked Gavrael again.

"How about me?" she asked him. Gavrael stared at her and then he scooped her up into his arms.

"Where are you bringing me? You're going to start teaching me things I must know and do as your right hand, right?" she said enthusiastically.

"Yes." He said and Evie's eyes twinkled with extreme glee. However, the smile on her face and the many stars in her eyes slowly faded as she realized he had brought her back into his room.

He put her down after he kicked the door shut with his boots and his hands were already silently reaching out for the ribbon of her cloak. W-wait...

Chapter 288 - Yet Again

Evie's heart thundered inside her chest as he took her cloak off. Oh my...

Then without a warning, he swooped her up into his arms again, causing her breath to catch. She missed this. Him, carrying her like this as he moved fluidly, so gracefully with his breath-taking vitality charging the air.

And just like that, as he put her on the bed and staring down at her with those intense blue flames in his eyes, the protest that Evie had prepared which was right at the tip of her tongue and about to verbalise had all died on the spot. He had not even done anything yet and already, he had pierced through her composure, surely and completely.

Perhaps, it was because she had been missing him so much and so badly. She could not deny to herself that she wanted him. It truly has been a long while since they had... Evie could not even finish the sentence in her mind before blushing hotly. She guessed that that was most probably why she was already feeling this raw and sweet feeling violently gathering low inside her even before he could do anything remotely intimate with her.

When he bent down, Evie held her breath and closed her eyes, waiting for the kiss. However...

The kiss did not come to her disappointment – secretly, of course. She opened her dazed eyes and saw him pulling on the blanket that was folded at the foot of the bed, then he covered her.

Evie blinked, speechless at his gentlemanly behaviour on not pouncing on her the very moment he could. And this is more astonishing, given that he would have known she was also very much willing to participate in the more excitable activities in bed, had he initiated it.

"It's time for you to sleep, Evie. It's already past midnight." He said, voice calm and cool – without a single ripple to it. And Evie's face coloured deep red in embarrassment. What? He was just putting her to bed?! What was she? A little kid that needed to be coaxed into bed?!

He pulled away after ensuring that she was comfortably tucked in and turned to leave when Evie quickly reached out and made a grab at his robe.

He turned, looking at her questioningly.

"Y-you said you're going to teach me. You said 'yes'." She managed to throw out something to stall him from leaving.

Gavrael's blank expression did not change one bit. He turned back to her and bent over before holding her shoulders and gently pushed her back down into bed.

He fixed his deep, blazing gaze at her as he brushed the stray strands of her hair away fondly from her face. The light and discreet collision of his fingers against her skin was making her feel ticklish. "Yes. I did say that. And yes, my word is as good as my promise to you." He spoke. "However... I never did say I'd teach you 'now'. You need to sleep. Even if you're stronger now, don't forget that your body still functions like any other humans." He was so considerate in explaining everything to her. It was as if he already knew her thought process and the objections that she would raise.

Evie could only fall speechless for a moment, then she chuckled softly. Glad that this was the reason why he was putting her to bed and not something else.

"Oh, don't worry about that Gav. I am already used to this. I can even sleep like the vampires now. Since I married you, I've learned to sleep and live like a vampire." She told him, her eyes gleaming with blissful nostalgia, as she remembered her days and nights with him. There was even a slight twinge of wishful thinking that how good it would be if they could return to those idyllic simpler days.

However, contrary to her expression, Gavrael was obviously displeased. His darkness suddenly flared out again, causing Evie's smile to fade off slowly, unsure what was it that displeased him this time. Did he not like what she just said? That she was living like a vampire now?

A heavy silence reigned between them. There he goes again, turning from balmy warm to freezing cold without the slightest hint or warning. His emotions just switch around so fast and the differences were so huge, as if a candle flame suddenly turning into hellfire in the blink of an eye.

Because he stayed so very still, Evie waited for him to calm his reeking dark magic and rein it back in. She could feel it, the pressure emanating from his every pore, so she decided to wait it out. She was afraid she would end up aggravating him – yet again. But the longer she waited, the more she could not bear the heavy and suffocating silence which kept rolling off from him.

She remembered that she had never felt this way with Gavriel – ever. She never found the silence between them suffocating and unbearable no matter how long they stay silent, but with him now, as Gavrael, it was somehow different. But she told herself that this was definitely because of his dark magic which was just too strong and overpowering. Perhaps it was due to the fact that she could physically feel it spill out from him and even crawl over her skin.

It was like the pressure of the magic subconsciously coming from him kept building up around her the longer she stays this close to him, squeezing and squeezing as the silence continued.

Evie then began to feel breathless. What is this? What is going on? She looked at him and he still stayed in that same position and maintained that stillness. His eyes that were smouldering intensely through the strands of his dark hair was still fixed on her, but it was as though he was not quite looking at her.

"G-gav..." Evie finally broke the silence when she started to feel the strange pressure began to really cut off her air supply. It was strangling her!

Chapter 289 - Price

Gavrael snapped back immediately to the present at the sound of her choking voice. His unseeing eyes now focused and widened as he looked at her, as if seeing something shocking and unforgivable.

Gavrael pulled back and quickly stepped away from her.

The pressure around Evie immediately disappeared as though it were not there in the first place. If not for Evie left panting there on the bed, even she would not have guessed that immense amount of pressure was there in the first place. What was that? What had just happened?

She looked at him as he raked his fingers through his dark hair and then turned around. He slammed his palms on the windowpanes in agitation. She quietly observed him as he leaned down and bent his head and then let out a sharp, angry breath.

When Evie's breathing returned to normal, she stood to approach him, but his voice thundered out in warning. "Don't approach me right now, Evie." He commanded darkly, his voice coated with raw anger and this time it was obvious that his rage was directed to no one but himself.

"What's wrong, Gav?" Evie's voice was soft and calming, neither did her feet stopped from moving closer to him despite the heavy warning he had issued barely seconds ago.

"I said, stay back!" he roared out and Evie was forced to halt in her steps. She could feel his roar like a shock wave had slammed into her body.

And before Evie could even say a single word, he was suddenly gone, and the entire room was surrounded with his thick impregnable barrier again.

Frozen, Evie could only stare at the closed door. What just happened? How did it end up like this again? What's going on with him?! She felt so confused and wanted to burst out in frustrated tears.

"Princess..." a voice echoed out softly and Evie whipped her head around. Claudius!

Upon seeing Claudius, Evie frantically approached his shadow. "I need your help! Something has happened!" she immediately began. "I think something's wrong with him."

"Calm down princess, please tell me what happened." The man patiently said.

Evie took a deep breath. "I think I angered him when I said I am living like a vampire now since I married him. He was silent for a long while and didn't do anything at first. So, I thought to wait his temper out as usual, but then even after waiting for quite a while, his temper did not abate. It was after that, I felt something strangling me. I believe it must be his magic and... and it seems as though his magic did that to me without him even realizing it was doing so. When he snapped out of it, he stepped back from me like he wanted me to avoid him. It was as though he thought himself to be some kind of deadly plague." Evie explained frantically.

And the moment Claudius heard that, the man's face unexpectedly turned so sullen. Evie even saw a tinge of hopelessness in his expression for a moment and her heart trembled strangely.

"W-what's going on with him? Please tell me." Evie asked, swallowing. She could just feel that whatever this man would end up telling her about Gavrael's earlier condition would be something she might not be able to accept.

Claudius looked at her and after a short while of silence, he answered. "Princess, please listen to what I have to say. You were right. It indeed was his dark magic that had acted out of its own free will and tried to harm you."

Evie swallowed. "Why? Why would such a thing happen? Could his own magic even act out on its own?"

The man looked away and let out a helpless sigh. "I can't believe he's reached that point already."

"That point? What point? Please, explain it to me." Evie felt her throat constrict with an unknown feeling when she continued looking at Claudius' ever darkening face.

"It's the peak of dark magic, princess. When I say peak, it's truly the highest level of dark magic ever known. It's the level of magic which is usually unreachable for anyone except for a select few. And these were the few dark fae kings who did somehow managed to reach that pinnacle of power. However, reaching that point will no doubt make one the strongest. But as the rule of magic applies, every magic has a price. The stronger you become, the more powerful magic you wield, the heavier the price you will need to end up paying. And that was why most of the kings who did reach that point, made a conscious and willing decision on not to cross over to that level... to achieve that pinnacle of dark magic. But there were a couple of kings who dared. And one of them was the previous king Gehenn, who risked it to try and put it as a challenge to himself.

Due to his greed for more power, he even dared cross that point and sought for more than he should have. He went down in history as the most powerful king ever, just as he wished. But he had grown too strong that his dark magic began to take control of him, instead of the other way around. Dark magic is helpful, it's an absolute power... But only as long as it remains as your servant and operates under your strict control. However, if you fail to do that, your dark magic will then end up becoming your master instead. And once that happens, the consequences will be beyond terrible." Claudius explained, there was a sadness that could not be hid in his voice.

Evie's lips trembled a little. "Are you saying that Gav's magic has become too strong that he is at that point where he might not be able to control it anymore?"

Chapter 290 - Method (Part I)

Silence reigned within the barrier in the room for a long while following Evie's question. The dark fae seemed to scrutinize Evie's expression first before he seemed to find the answers he was looking for.

After giving a nod to himself, he replied to Evie. "That's the only explanation on why that had happened to you, princess. You said he didn't even realize that he was doing it... so, it could only mean one thing. And that would be his magic is now starting to act on their own."

Claudius let out a distressed sigh, and Evie could tell that he was pretty worried now. Claudius was dreading on how he was going to find a way to break this news to the King.

"Honestly, I am terribly shocked that this had happened..." Claudius continued. "I had made sure he has not reached that level before he left the Under Lands. I can't believe he has grown that much stronger now. I can only think that it's because his magic has been completely suppressed within him for such a long time now, instead of disappearing. And now that the magic is being freed after all these years of suppression and accumulation, it has now reached that point. It's akin to a volcano suddenly becoming active again after a long time of being suppressed into dormancy."

A long heavy sigh came from him again as he said those words.

"Please tell me, there must be something I can do to help him keep his magic under control." Evie asked him desperately, her eyes pleading for help. "That only happened once. And it only occurred just a few minutes ago. Thus, I believe, it's not too late yet. I know Gav can learn to control his magic no matter how strong it is. I don't believe he'll allow himself to lose control of his own magic. I know him."

The faith in her eyes made Claudius's heart warm but he could only smile sadly. His devastated expression did not change because he knew better. He had seen it himself and he had been one of those who had tried so hard to find a remedy so long ago. But their efforts had been futile.

"I am sorry princess, but I have no idea how to help him. King Gehenn had turned completely mad when his magic had finally consumed him. He was so out of control that he had nearly destroyed the entire Under Land if not for King Belial who had stepped up and stopped him before that could happen. His heart, mind, body and soul were completely and utterly corrupted by his own dark magic that it even reached to the point that he could no longer recognize anyone any longer – not even his own wife and children. All he had desired... all that his mind was filled with was for a bloodbath and chaos to reign."

"But Gav is not King Gehenn!" Evie's voice became a little loud as she insisted, her eyes becoming fiercer even as they reddened at the corners. "He will not let himself reach that point. His case is not completely hopeless... it's not too late yet..."

Evie was not even saying those words to Claudius anymore. She was stating all those to herself, loudly and insistently, believing every single word of it with all her heart. Her Gav will never let such a thing happen to him. "I believe in him! And I'll do anything and everything to help him. I don't care what it is... I will do it for him!" Evie vehemently declared, as her eyes looked at Claudius, shining with determination.

"How do you plan to help him, princess? Do you have any ideas on how to proceed? Knowing him, he might distance himself from you now since he realised that he had nearly harmed you without him being aware of it. Prince Gavrael loves you too much and I am certain he will never forgive himself for causing harm to you, princess."

Evie knew what Claudius said was right. She could already tell that Gav will definitely do that. In fact, he had already done that. Did he not run away so quickly after he was aware that he was unknowingly hurting her?

She drew in a deep breath before letting it out heavily.

Clenching her fists tight, Evie forced herself to think. She needed a plan – a damned good one at that – and she must execute it as soon as possible before it was too late.

As she frantically tried to come up with an idea, she instinctively grabbed onto her necklace. The instant the necklace began to glow, the memories of her and Gavriel flashed in her mind. Her eyes widened with realization. That was right! If she could somehow help him recall his memories that he lived out as Gavriel...

"I think I just need to get him to remember Gavriel's memories." Evie suggested to Claudius. "Once Gavriel's memories returns to him, his vampire side would also emerge right? So, I'm presuming that if both sides of him, his dark fae side and vampire side are able to co-exist, it might have a very high chance where his magic can reach some sort of a balance! What do you think? Would this method work?" Evie was excited as she shared her thoughts with Claudius.

Her idea awed Claudius once again. Since prince Gavrael was the first ever half dark fae and half vampire he had ever known, there was no one he could base these assumptions on. Meaning he did not have a single idea on what might work or not on him. Therefore, the princess' idea could very well work!

"I think your idea is very logical, princess." The dark fae nodded his agreement.

"I remember Gavrael telling me that there is a way for me to remember what I have forgotten. Do you know the method he was talking about? If possible, I think I could use that method on him!" Evie said.